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DEPT FOR EUR/SCE, EUR/ACE, DRL, PRM, IO, NSC FOR BBRAUN,
USUN, BUDAPEST FOR POSNER-MULLEN

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TAGS: [PREF](#) [EAID](#) [SENV](#) [PHUM](#) [UNMIK](#) [KDEM](#) [YI](#)

SUBJECT: KOSOVO ROMA MOVE TO LEAD-SAFE RELOCATION FACILITY,
FUNDING NEEDED FOR TREATMENT

REF: A. PRISTINA 256

[1](#)B. 05 PRISTINA 1172

Sensitive but unclassified, please protect accordingly.

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY. Over 290 Roma from two lead-contaminated refugee camps in north Mitrovica have moved to the Osterode temporary relocation facility. All involved agree that a convalescence center to treat Roma with lead poisoning will be built there. The World Health Organization (WHO) has decided to use international medical personnel to treat lead-contamination patients rather than Kosovo Serb doctors from the Belgrade-run hospital in north Mitrovica. USG money, due to arrive within days, will be dedicated to medical care. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (SBU) In March 2006 UNMIK brokered an agreement with political and health structures run by hardline Kosovo Serbs in northern Kosovo to treat lead-contaminated Roma in the north Mitrovica hospital. As of April 20, approximately 290 Roma from Kablar and Cesmin Lug camps have moved; Roma in the third camp, Zitkovac, are eager to move as well. UNMIK quietly dismantled Kablar camp on April 2.

INTERNATIONALS TO ADMINISTER TREATMENT

[1](#)3. (SBU) WHO's Serbia Director Dorit Nitzan told poloff while in Kosovo April 4 that WHO doubted that the north Mitrovica hospital would prove a cooperative partner and so had decided to retain an international doctor and staff and to administer all treatment at Osterode. UNMIK's Neville Fouche said April 3 that his construction team can build a convalescence facility at Osterode in as little as two weeks to monitor children for 14 days after their five days of inpatient treatment as soon as USG funds become available (ref A). He later added that donor funding given to UNMIK for the relocation to Osterode is nearly depleted because of the running costs associated with having an open, uninhabited facility for nearly two months in January and February. Funding is also needed, he said, to implement the modifications to the Osterode facility which were recommended by the CDC and the US Army report (ref B), such as paving over dirt.

¶4. (SBU) WHO's local doctor Skender Sylja told poloff April 4 that priority will be given to treating children under 14, the majority of those tested and found to have high blood lead levels (BLL). Another 30 adults have tested in the "dangerous" BLL range. According to Sylja, children from Zitkovac refugee camp have the highest BLL because this camp is where Roma did most of the lead smelting from car batteries which contaminated the dirt floors on which the children played. WHO has completed preliminary BLL testing on the 400 Roma under 14; 120 of the Roma inhabitants of the camps could either not be located or refused testing. Of those tested, 85 were found to have BLL above the dangerous limit of 45 micrograms/deciliter and according to WHO will be the first treated.

¶5. (SBU) COMMENT. Although this solution circumvents the politicization and intransigence of northern Serb political structures, it is more expensive. The EUR/ACE SEED funding earmarked for the Roma health emergency will address the acute medical lead contamination emergency in the three camps in a convalescence center at an already-constructed Osterode camp by providing for movable equipment for monitoring and lab testing which can eventually be used by Kosovo's health care system. END COMMENT.
GURIAN